

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7421

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 2661

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PFOR, PN, PQ,US

SUBJECT: HIGHLIGHTS OF 422ND PRC MEETING, APRIL 14, 1976

1. CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT: AMBASSADOR ANALYZED RECENT CHANGES IN GOP, CONVEYING OUR IMPRESSIONS OF NEW FOREIGN MINISTER, AQUILINO BOYD, AND OUR BELIEF MINISTRY WILL OPERATE QUITE DIFFERENTLY UNDER ITS NEW CHIEF. AMBASSADOR RECOUNTED HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH BOYD IN WHICH LATTER EXPRESSED HIS WISH TO HAVE CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONS WITH US AND EMBASSY.

2. CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS: MOST OF PRC MEETING WAS TAKEN UP BY GOVERNOR'S FULL REPORT OF PANAMA CANAL SUBCOMMITTEE HEARINGS OF LAST WEEK, DETAILS OF WHICH DEPARTMENT FULLY AWARE. AMONG IMPRESSIONS GOVERNOR SEEMED TO DRAW FROM HEARING WERE: (A) THERE IS STRONG OPPOSITION TO NEW TREATY IN CONGRESS AND SENSE OF CONGRESS SEEMS TO BE HARDENING;

(B) CONGRESS WILL REMAIN ALERT AND HOLD ACCOUNTABLE THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING AND ENFORCING US JURISDICTION AND FOR STRICT APPLICATION OF US LAWS; (C) CONGRESS WILL SCRUTINIZE ANY INTERIM ACTIONS THAT ARE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF NEW TREATY.

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3. JURISDICTIONAL PROBLEMS: GOVERNOR MENTIONED BRIEFLY THAT CZG OFFER TO ISSUE LAND LICENCE TO LIONS CLUB FOR PANAMANIAN PLAYGROUND AT GAVILAN POINT HAS NEVER BEEN TAKEN UP BUT THAT SOME CONSTRUCTION HAD BEEN STARTED ANYHOW. GOVERNOR STATED THAT CONSTRUCTION WAS HALTED AS RESULT OF EFFORTS MADE BY GUARDIA NACIONAL LIAISON OFFICER. GOVERNOR ALSO REPORTED THAT CUSTOMS OFFICE BEING CONSTRUCTED AT OLD FRANCE FIELD LIES PARTIALLY OUTSIDE OF AREA WHICH GOP AUTHORIZED TO USE. MOREOVER, PANAMANIANIANS WANT TO INSTALL A BUS STOP OUTSIDE ITS AREA. GOVERNOR SAID THAT SOLUTIONS TO THESE PROBLEMS ARE BEING SOUGHT.

4. WATER RATES: GOVERNOR STATED THAT PANCANAL IS NOT TAKING ACTION ON GOP (IDAAN) REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO TAKE WATER FROM GATUN LAKE FOR COLON PRUIFICATION PLANT. HE SAID HE NOT INCLINED TO TAKE ANY ACTION WHILE GOP UNWILLING EVEN DISCUSS NEW PANCANAL WATER RATES FOR POTABLE WATER. AMBASSADOR TOLD HOW HE BROACHED SUBJECT RECENTLY WITH PRES. LAKAS AND PLANS TO EXPLORE MATTER AGAIN WITH PRESIDENT AT EARLY DATE.
JORDEN

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